

REMARKS

Applicant has carefully studied the Office Action mailed on April 7, 2006, and offers the following remarks to accompany the above amendments. Applicant appreciates the indication that claims 22, 23, 26-28, and 51-65 are allowable over the prior art.

Status of the Claims

Claims 1-4, 6-16, 19-23, 26-28, and 43-65 are currently pending in the present application.

Claims 1 and 19 have been canceled.

Claims 3, 4, 8-16, 22, 23, 26-28, 44, 45, 48, 49, and 51-65 were indicated as containing allowable subject matter. As such, claims 3, 9, and 44 have been rewritten in independent form, and claims 2, 6, 20, 21, and 46 have been amended to correct their dependencies. No new matter is added.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 19 and 43-46 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicant regards as the invention. Claim 19 has been canceled, mooting this rejection.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 1, 2, 6, 7, and 21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,429,274 to Vlaskamp (hereinafter "Vlaskamp") in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,997,012 to Kuwiz (hereinafter "Kuwiz"). In light of the claim amendments, this rejection is now moot. These amendments are not to be interpreted as agreeing with the Patent Office or its reasoning regarding this rejection. Applicant reserves the right to address any issues in this rejection.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 19, 20, 43, 46, 47, and 50 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Vlaskamp in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,575,206 to Struthers et al. (hereinafter "Struthers"). In light of the claim amendments, this rejection is now moot. These amendments

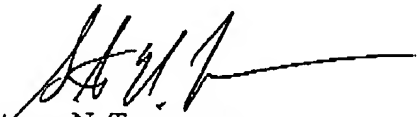
are not to be interpreted as agreeing with the Patent Office or its reasoning regarding this rejection. Applicant reserves the right to address any issues in this rejection.

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the rejections in light of the amendments and remarks presented herein, and earnestly solicits claim allowance at the Examiner's earliest convenience.

Respectfully submitted,

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